

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 WARSAW 05913 01 OF 02 301037Z

11

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-06 PA-04 PRS-01 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03

SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 SIL-01 EB-11

COME-00 AID-20 IGA-02 FEA-02 L-03 NIC-01 SAI-01 INT-08

DRC-01 LAB-06 /142 W

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R 300945Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1462

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION BERLIN

AMCONSUL KRAKOW

AMCONSUL POZNAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 5913

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PINT, PL

SUBJECT: SHAKE-UP IN MINISTRY MINING AND POWER

REF WARSAW 5859 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE CENTRAL PRESS REPORTED SEPTEMBER 25 AND 26 A SERIES OF HIGH-LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY OF MINING AND POWER. VICE PREMIER JAN MITREGA WAS REPLACED AS MINISTER BY JAN KULPINSKI, THOUGH MITREGA RETAINS HIS OTHER PARTY AND GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. VICE MINISTER ZYGFRYD NOWAK WAS REPLACED BY BENON STRANZ, AND ERYK PORABKA WAS RELIEVED OF HIS POST AS VICE MINISTER AND INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT OF THE HIGHER MINING ADMINISTRATION, REPLACING ADAM SZCZUROWSKI. IN ADDITION, JERZY KUCHARCZYK WAS NAMED TO THE NEW POST OF
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PAGE 02 WARSAW 05913 01 OF 02 301037Z

FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER. FROM PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE, WE BELIEVE

THESE CHANGES ARE PART OF A GENERAL REASSESSMENT AND REORGANIZATION OF PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP IN THE KEY AREAS OF COAL MINING, ENERGY, AND TRANSPORTATION. HIGH PERFORMANCE IN THESE AREAS IS CRITICAL TO THE POLISH ECONOMY AND TO POLISH EXPORTS, AND MITREGA, AS VICE PREMIER, HAS BROAD SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT FOR ALL THESE SECTORS. LABOR PROBLEMS IN THE COAL MINES AND SHORTFALLS IN TRANSPORTATION, RECENTLY THE SUBJECT OF A PRESS CAMPAIGN (SEE WARSAW 5110), UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO MITREGA'S DISMISSAL, BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT MITREGA WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE HIS AUTHORITY AS VICE PREMIER AND, ACCORDING TO ONE POLISH SOURCE, WILL NOW CONCENTRATE ON THE IMPORTANT PROBLEM OF TRANSPORTATION. THE NEW PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY ALL HAVE BACKGROUNDS IN PRODUCTION AND IN COAL-MINE MANAGEMENT. ALTHOUGH FURTHER PERSONNEL CHANGES MAY BE EXPECTED, WE DO NOT FORESEE ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. MITREGA'S DISMISSAL: THE PRESS REPORTED ON SEPTEMBER 25 THAT THE COUNCIL OF STATE, IN A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 24, HAD AT THE BEHEST OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ACCEPTED MITREGA'S REQUEST TO BE RELIEVED OF HIS POST AS MINISTER OF MINING AND POWER. MITREGA, WHO HAD BEEN MINISTER OF MINING AND POWER SINCE 1959, RETAINS HIS POSITIONS AS VICE PREMIER, MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, DELEGATE TO THE SEJM, CHAIRMAN OF THE POLISH-GDR COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE POLISH DELEGATION TO THE PERMANENT COAL COMMISSION OF CEMA. THE COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING WHICH ACCEPTED MITREGA'S RESIGNATION WAS HELD CONCURRENTLY WITH A MEETING IN KATOWICE OF AN "AKTYW" OF PARTY AND ECONOMIC LEADERS IN THE COAL INDUSTRY. THE "AKTYW" WAS CHAIRED BY ZDZISLAW GRUDZIEN, PARTY FIRST SECRETARY FOR KATOWICE PROVINCE, AND ATTENDED BY PARTY SECRETARY JAN SZYDLAK, PREMIER JAROSZEWICZ, MITREGA, AND KULPINSKI, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS.

3. THE MEETING OF THE "AKTYW," ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, REAFFIRMED THE MAJOR ROLE OF MINING IN THE POLISH ECONOMY AND IN FOREIGN TRADE, IT CALLED FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY IN THE USE OF LABOR, IMPROVEMENTS IN MINE SAFETY AND WORKING CONDITIONS, IMPROVEMENT IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF MINERS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 WARSAW 05913 01 OF 02 301037Z

AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND BETTER APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. THE MEETING CITED AS "CONDITIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT" A FULLER UTILIZATION OF LABOR, STRONGER WORK DISCIPLINE, INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF TASKS, THE CREATION OF A CLIMATE OF GOOD INTERPERSONAL (MIEDZYLUDZKI) RELATIONS, AND CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN SUPERVISORS AND WORKERS. JAROSZEWICZ REPORTEDLY INFORMED THE MEETING THAT 110,000 NEW APARTMENTS FOR MINERS WOULD BE BUILT OVER THE

NEXT FIVE YEARS, AND THAT 20 NEW "MINERS' HOTELS" (DORMITORIES) WOULD BE ERECTED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.

4. THE ACCOUNT OF THE "AKTYW" GIVES CREDENCE TO RUMORS WE HAVE HEARD OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS ABOUT LABOR PROBLEMS IN THE SILESIAN COAL MINES. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF RISING WORKER DISSATISFACTION WITH LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS, ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING THE DISASTER IN JUNE WHICH TOOK THE LIVES OF 32 MINERS. ALTHOUGH ONE MFA SOURCE ATTRIBUTED MITREGA'S DISMISSAL TO PRODUCTION PROBLEMS (REFTEL), WE NOTE THAT PRODUCTION EXCEEDED PLANNED LEVELS OVER THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1974 DESPITE A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF MEN WORKING BELOW GROUND. PRESSURE FOR GREATER PRODUCTION REMAINS INTENSE, HOWEVER. ALTHOUGH EXPORTS OF COAL HAVE RISEN ENORMOUSLY, SERIOUSLY REDUCTING INLAND STOCKS, EXPORT COMMITMENTS WILL BE ONLY PARTIALLY MET IN 1974. ONE POLISH SOURCE ESTIMATED THAT, DESPITE WAGE INCREASES WHICH GIVE MINERS THE HIGHEST INDUSTRIAL WAGE IN POLAND, EMPLOYMENT IN THE MINES IS 16,000 MEN BELOW THE DESIRED LEVEL, AND THERE IS EVIDENCE OF LABOR SHORTAGES IN MINING-EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING PLANTS AS WELL. CLEARLY, THE MINERS ARE BEING WORKED TO THE LIMIT, PERHAPS TO THE DETRIMENT OF MINE SAFETY, AND REPORTS OF WORK STOPPAGES ARE VELIEVABLE, ALTHOUGH NOT CONFIRMED. THE PERSONNEL CHANGES MAY BE DESIGNED IN PART TO GIVE MINERS THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMETHING IS BEING DONE TO IMPROVE THEIR SITUATION.

5. MITREGA'S DISMISSAL MAY AUGUR CHANGES IN PARTY PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR MINING. ONE POLISH SOURCE REPORTED PLAUSIBLY THAT GRUDZIEN, WHO CHAIRED THE "AKTYW," WILL BE CALLED TO THE SECRETARIAT FROM KATOWICE AT THE NEXT CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, NOW EXPECTED IN LATE OCTOBER. IN THE SECRETAIAT, ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, GRUDZIEN WOULD HAVE RESPONSIBILITY

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 WARSAW 05913 01 OF 02 301037Z

FOR MINING AND ENERGY, AND PERHAPS FOR SOME OTHER INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

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PAGE 01 WARSAW 05913 02 OF 02 301051Z

11

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-06 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 PM-07

NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 EB-11

COME-00 AID-20 IGA-02 FEA-02 L-03 NIC-01 SAI-01 INT-08

LAB-06 SIL-01 DRC-01 /157 W

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R 300945Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1463

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION BERLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 WARSAW 5913

6. NOWAK'S DISMISAL: NOWAK WAS CLEARLY TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE CHANGE IN HIS FORTUNES. ON SEPTEMBER 24, HE WAS DISCUSSING PLANS FOR TRAVEL TO THE US WITH THE MFA AND SCHEDULING MEETINGS IN KATOWICE FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK. AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, WHO WAS TO CALL ON NOWAK ON SEPTEMBER 25, TOLD US THAT HIS CONTACTS IN THE COAL INDUSTRY IN KATOWICE BLAMED MITREGA'S DISMISSAL ON LACK OF IMPROVEMENT IN LIVING CONDITIONS FOR MINERS, BUT ATTRIBUTED NOWAK'S DEMISE TO HIS "PROGRESSIVE IDEAS" AND LACK OF PARTY CONNECTIONS. A POLISH SOURCE, HOWEVER, TOLD US THAT NOWAK WAS MOVED ASIDE BECAUSE HE WAS TOO CLOSE TO MITREGA AND BECAUSE THE NEW MINISTER WANTED TO INSTALL HIS OWN MEN.

7. NEITHER MITREGA NOR NOWAK APPEARS TO HAVE EXPECTED TO BE REMOVED. I HAD AN APPOINTMENT WITH MITREGA FOR 1:00 P.M.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 WARSAW 05913 02 OF 02 301051Z

ON SEPTEMBER 25 TO PRESENT HIM WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIS MAY TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES AND NOWAK WAS SCHEDULED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING. THE APPOINTMENT WAS CANCELLED ONLY ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 25. MITREGA'S OFFICE SAID THAT HE HAD TO ATTEND "AN URGENT MEETING" IN KATOWICE. THE APPOINTMENT WILL BE RE-SCHEDULED LATER, AT WHICH TIME I MAY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN SOME INSIGHT INTO THE EXACT CHARACTER OF MITREGA'S

CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTO PLANS FOR NOWAK'S FUTURE.

8. COMMENT: THE DISMISSAL OF MITREGA, SO LONG A FIXTURE IN THE POLISH COAL INDUSTRY, WAS THOROUGHLY UNEXPECTED, AND WE CANNOT YET DISCERN THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVE. WE ARE INCLINED TO THE VIEW THAT MITREGA WILL RETAIN CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY OVER POLICY IN THE AREAS OF MINING, ENERGY, AND TRANSPORTATION, WHILE THE NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE MINISTRY, UNDER CLOSE PARTY SUPERVISION, ATTEMPTS TO GRAPPLE WITH THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF THE LABOR FORCE IN THE SILESIAN BASIN. END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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